

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
CITY OF BRIGANTINE

BRIGANTINE

NEW JERSEY



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The Honorable Frank A. LoBiondo
Congressman, 2nd District, New Jersey
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515-3002

Sir,

The city has finally been able to complete the purchase of the St. Philips property. In the past year or so, we researched various funding sources to help offset our costs (**purchase price of \$2.6 million and approximately renovation costs of \$5.5 million for a total estimated project cost of \$8.1 million**). Unfortunately, being that we had not actually purchased the property (and more importantly, had not had the special referendum vote authorizing the bonding of the purchase), we were not eligible to apply for any of the FY2008/2009 EOC or PDM (Pre Disaster Mitigation) Grant opportunities. Through the New Jersey State Police and the Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management, the FY2009 PDM grant was awarded to Atlantic County Office of Emergency Management. That money was designated to fund a county wide (with all municipalities participating) Pre Disaster and All Hazards Mitigation Plan, which, when complete will enable the cities in the county to be eligible for funding based on a FEMA requirement for an All Hazards Mitigation Plan. They anticipate a late summer/early fall completion and FEMA/NJOEM acceptance of the project. That would allow our municipality to first become eligible for funding opportunities in FY2011 at best. The city did receive a \$1.9 million dollar grant from Green Acres (via Atlantic County Government) for open space funding to offset some of the purchase price. As of this point, we have been unable to neither secure nor locate any additional sources of funding for the project and are respectfully requesting any support your office can offer. Being that the St. Philips property is one of the highest points and most accessible on the island, parts of the plans for it include creating an **Emergency Operations Center** as well as a **"Shelter of Last Resort"**.

Currently the City of Brigantine's Emergency Operations Center is located at City Hall in a small office of the Police Department. We are limited to standard methods of communication (city wide radio system and in house city telephone) and are "at the mercy" of City Hall itself being able to function. As it stands, if we were forced to evacuate City Hall for any reason

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during an emergency, we would have no backup Operations Center. One proposed phase of the construction and renovation of St. Phillips would be to make the second floor area into a fully functioning and stand alone Emergency Operations Center. As part of the overall project, there would be adequate backup power generation in place (via a large outdoor generator), a communications console, with the ability to communicate with other EOC's and governmental agencies, as well as Amateur Radio(HAM) equipment in the event of a system wide radio failure in Brigantine. We would also propose to have stand along telephone and computer network systems in place to ensure uninterrupted communications with agencies that would assist us in the event that we become isolated during an event or incident. One of the most critical uses for the building would be as a shelter of last resort.

Being a barrier island, the Red Cross and FEMA will not certify nor allow any "official" evacuation shelters. However, being a barrier island with only one access road, the possibility of our town becoming isolated (or another surrounding town/roadway becoming inaccessible) is a very real one. As such, we are proposing as part of the renovations, to use the facility as a "Shelter of Last Resort", whereby, in the event that we become isolated or our residents are unable to be evacuated to another shelter off island, we would be able to temporarily house up to 2000 people. The plans include, as previously mentioned, a standalone generator system capable of supplying enough power for the emergency operations center equipment, and enough power for heating systems and basic necessities in the shelter area (including a kitchen area to help feed evacuees). As part of the renovation project, the existing structure would be expanded by approximately 6000 sq. feet, to facilitate the sheltering as well as other essential municipal services. The city would be on its own and have to remain self sufficient until other responding agencies were able to reach the island, or we were able to get to them. Part and parcel with being self sufficient would also include the ability for our city government to function at a reasonable level.

Another proposed usage of the site would be to ensure that we have Continuity of Operations and Continuation of Government (COOP/COG). Currently, if a catastrophic event or incident was to impact city hall directly or we were forced to evacuate, we have no backup site in place. As part of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), we would have space and equipment allocated for critical municipal functions (Tax, Finance, Personnel, Mayor/Council, as well as Public Safety and DPW). The COOP/COG plans and operation during an emergency declaration or other disaster are just as critical as the housing of our residents who are unable to evacuate. On behalf of the City of Brigantine, we appreciate your offices efforts on behalf of our region and thank you for taking the time in this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,


James C. Bennett, Lieutenant